China would not alienate any part of that province to any power.

Still another form which foreign aggression and competition assumed was the demand for concessions to build railways. Such concessions, of course, would make a convenient basis for a claim to the territory they traversed, in case, as seemed very possible, China were to go the way of so much of the non-Occidental earth and be partitioned. Late in 1896, Russia obtained a secret alliance with China against Japan with the provision for the construction of a railroad across Manchuria. This line, to be known as the Chinese Eastern, was to be a subsidiary of the Russo-Chinese Bank and was, in effect, a continuation of the Trans-Siberian Railway. It would not only save distance as against the all-Russian route on the north bank of the Amur, but would give Russia a grip on Manchuria. Special privileges were accorded the road which increased this hold. China also promised to seek only from Russian banks the loans it might require for the construction of certain trunk lines which it contemplated building north of the Great Wall. Li Hung-chang, who negotiated the agreement, was hoping to play Russia off against Japan and so to save something for China.

In addition to the concessions granted the Russians in Manchuria and the Gerftians in Shantung, the British obtained the predominant financial position in the Peking-Mukden line. In June, 1898, a contract was signed with the Belgians for a loan on the proposed road from Peking to Hankow. The Belgians had French and Russian support and the backing of French capital. The line was originally planned by the Viceroy Chang Chih-tung

as a Chinese undertaking and later had almost been entrusted to an American company. In 1899 a concession was made to British and German interests for a railway—which Americans thought had been secured to them the preceding year—between Tientsin and the Yangtze, the Germans to finance and build the northern and the British the southern portion. In 1896, 1897, 1898, and 1899, France obtained concessions for railways in the South, the most important of which was for one from Tongking into Yiinnan. Americans acquired, in 1898, the concession for the Hankow-Canton line, but some years later, after the Belgians had bought a controlling interest in the American company, the grant was re-purchased by the Chinese. In 1898 the British secured conces-